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## **Sen. Allen's legislation will help promote East Jordan, northern Michigan businesses**

**LANSING** – Legislation that would allow tourism-related businesses to display directional signs was approved by the Senate Committee on Transportation Tuesday, announced Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City.

“Our great state is filled with countless attractions and hidden treasures,” Allen said. “This legislation would allow businesses that rely on tourism to provide directions for travelers. We need to make Michigan’s hidden treasures easier to find.”

Senate Bill 735, sponsored by Allen, would allow the operators of tourist-oriented attractions to erect directional signs within the jurisdiction of a local unit of government, with approval from the local governing body.

Allen was joined at the committee meeting by David Smith, who owns the Mallard Golf Course in East Jordan with his son Arnold. According to Smith, the one summer they had a directional sign their business increased.

Even though the city approved the sign, the Smiths were later informed by the state that the sign was against the law. The golf course, which is located on M-66, depends heavily upon tourists.

“We had a sign up one summer and our business was up,” David Smith said. “This last summer we couldn’t have a sign up and our business was down. Without the sign, no one can find us. We can advertise in the paper and on radio, but without a directional sign no one can find us. Tourists are important to our business and our community.”

Operators of tourist-based businesses can only have signs erected if it is outside the limits of a village or city, regardless of where the business is located. Under the new legislation, businesses would still apply to the Michigan Department of Transportation for a permit to erect a tourism-related directional sign.

“I’m glad to do everything in my power to help the Smiths,” Allen said. “This is an important piece of legislation.”

SB 735 will now go before the full Senate for consideration.

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**Editor’s note:** A photo of Allen and Dave Smith testifying before the Senate Committee on Transportation is available on the Web at:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Allen/Allen.htm>